Keep

FRED HUBBARD . . .
still missing

OTTO KERNER . . .
under indictment

ARTHUR BIDWILL
under investigation

THEODORE J. ISAACS
under indictment

JOSEPH E. KNIGHT . . .
under indictment

WILLIAM S. MILLER . . .
under indictment

Getting more than the vote?

Official misconduct rife in state

BY TOM WATTS

SIDNEY HILLMAN, a politician of some dexterity, said it: "Politics is the science of how who gets what, when, and why."

In Illinois, of late, that science seems to have evolved into a fine art and the definition shortened to simply: "Where's mine?"

With judges, a former governor, a state's attorney, state senators and representatives, and a suburban mayor all involved in alleged gorgings at the public trough, a bemused taxpayer is entitled to wonder whether we're getting a poorer class of public servants or a better class of questionable characters in public office.

There exists, too, the corollary possibility that maybe we've just developed a heightened awareness of "who gets what," thanks to prying newsmen and increasingly nosy citizens' groups ready and willing to blow the whistle when pocket-lining gets affrontingly ostentatious.

Chicago, Cook County, and Illinois have no patent on profiteering in politics, certainly, but they've never had to apologize for the quality of their practitioners.

Yet a quick roundup of merely the most prominent cases involving politicians in the state does seem to indicate we've got a disproportionate number, even for this vicinity.

While many of the charges against high office-holders remain to be proved in court, there have been convictions and so many investigations that even the Illinois General Assembly, of all reluctant governing bodies, finally passed ethics-in-government legislation.

WITH NO ATTEMPT to pass judgment and no claim to have covered all the bases, here's a list of current and choice cases involving public figures:

● Judge Otto Kerner of the United States Court of Appeals and former governor of Illinois is awaiting trial in Knoxville, Tenn., on charges including bribery, mail fraud, tax evasion, perjury, and conspiracy stemming from the state race track stock scandals.

Indicted with Kerner by a federal grand jury are Theodore Isaacs, former state director of revenue; William S. Miller, former chairman of the Illinois Racing Board; Joseph E. Knight, former director of state financial institutions, and Faith McInturf, Miller's former secretary.

● State's Atty. Edward V. Hanrahan is seeking a second term in office while awaiting trial with 13 other law enforcement officers for conspiracy to obstruct justice arising from a 1969 raid in which two Black Panther Party leaders, Mark Clark and Fred Hampton, were slain.

● The Independent Voters of Illinois is [illegible] former traffic judge Raymond K. Berg, one of Hanrahan's opponents in the primary election, off the ballot because many of the names on his nominating petitions allegedly were falsified.

● State Sen. Arthur Bidwill [R., River Forest], has been under investigation regarding huge profits on race track stock he and members of his family secretly held. The stock was acquired at bargain rates while Bidwill was Senate majority leader.

● State Sen. Bernard S. Neistein [D., Chicago], a close friend of Bidwill, has been accused of concealing ownership of lucrative race track stocks and of neglecting to mention those holdings in a "statement of economic interests" required by state law. He, too, is believed to be a person of interest to federal probers.

● State Rep. Bernard J. O'Hallaren [D., Chicago], who "double dips" as an assistant Chicago corporation counsel, has admitted he failed to file federal income tax returns for three years. He has confessed to "procrastination."

● State Rep. Harold Washington [D., Chicago], is to be sentenced March 10 on conviction of failing to file federal income tax returns for 1964, 1965, 1967, and 1969. He says he plans to run for re-election in November anyway.

● Further down on the political ladder, former Calumet City Mayor Joseph W. Nowak last week began serving a three-year stretch in Sandstone, [Minn.] Federal Prison for embezzlement while in office. He stayed on the job as mayor of the suburb while unsuccessfully appealing his case.

● Stanley Thoms, former Alsip police chief, will be arraigned Thursday on bribery and ticket fixing indictments returned by a county grand jury. Another police chief, Paul Eaker of Crest Hill, convicted of official misconduct last Friday, still faces trial on charges of burglary and conspiracy.

And then there's the case of Chicago Alderman Fred Hubbard [2d], missing for months after disappearing with funds from a federal project he headed and still the object of an international search. Officially, he's still an incumbent alderman, the City Council having been even slower than usual to act and declare his seat vacant.

The list of how who got what could be longer still. The reason why has baffled psychiatrists, theologians, political scientists, and honest politicians, as well as plain citizens, for years.